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21-CONVI,
3-

Central Manufacturing Company
Connersville
Fayette County
Indiana

Photographs and
Written and Historical data

HAER
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Central Manufacturing Company

HAER IN-

Location:	North side of 18th Street, 400 feet west of Western Ave. UTM: 16.659550.4390930 Quad: Connersville, Indiana
Date of Construction:	1906
Present Owner:	Removed
Significance:	The Central Manufacturing Company was an important component in the automobile manufacturing industries created by Edward W. Ansted. Except for a single attempt at automobile production, the Central Company concentrated on the production of auto bodies under Ansted's ownership.
Historians:	Robert Rosenberg Donald Sackheim

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The Central Manufacturing Company, organized on 7 April 1898 was an important component in the automobile manufacturing industries created by Edward W. Ansted. (See HAER IN-9, IN-11). The company, which initially manufactured woodwork for buggies and carriages, moved with other Ansted-owned companies which were shifting from buggy and carriage production to automobile-oriented production. The company began manufacturing automobile bodies in 1903. Except for a single attempt to produce automobiles in 1905, the Central Manufacturing Company concentrated primarily on the production of automobile bodies. Between 1903 and 1907 they manufactured wooden bodies, and after 1907 they concentrated on metal auto body production. Between 1917 and 1925, the company produced automobile bodies for many of Indiana's auto manufacturers.

The first factory, located at 123 West 7th Street, was destroyed by fire in 1905. In 1906 a building 620' x 60' was erected north of 18th Street bordering the Whitewater Canal. In order to accomodate the expansion of the firm into metal auto body production, an addition, 142' x 76' was constructed in 1907. In 1908, the Central Manufacturing Company, under the direction of William B. Ansted, brother of the company's founder, began construction of a 236' x 76' addition on the north side of the structure. Two more additions were built on the south end -- a 240' x 76' structure completed in 1910 and a 192' x 76' addition completed in 1912. This brought the overall length of the building to 810' x 76'.

In 1913 a blacksmith shop 150' x 40' and a building 240' x 60' were built for the metal press departments bringing the total factory floor space to approximately 150,000 square feet.

On 30 March 1917 a fire partially destroyed several of the buildings of the Central Manufacturing Company plant, but the company rebuilt quickly.

In May 1930 the Central Manufacturing Company plant was sold to the Aburn Automobile Company. Aburn, under the leadership of E.L. Cord, had acquired control of several Ansted-owned enterprises in Connersville. Following the bankruptcy of the Aburn Motor Company in late 1937, the Aburn Central Manufacturing Company emerged from reorganization and took control of the factory.

In March 1942 the Aburn Central Manufacturing Company changed its name to the American Central Company. American Central became a division of Avco Corporation in 1947 and organized a celebration to commemorate the 50 year history of the plant on 7 April 1948. The celebration emphasized the history of the firms which had begun manufacturing auto bodies and had diversified production to include the manufacture of military jeep bodies, refrigerators, and kitchen equipment. In 1958, the Design Manufacturing Corporation bought the old Central Manufacturing Company plant from American Central.

Central Manufacturing Company

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